

Manchester Health Department, City of Manchester, NH

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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LYME DISEASE CASES INCREASING

Since the spring of 2005, the Manchester Health Department has noted an increased number of cases of Lyme disease in Manchester residents. Since July 1, 2005, nine cases have been reported to the Health Department an increase from six cases reported during the previous 12-month period. While it is often difficult to determine where the tick exposure causing the infection actually took place, a number of our recent cases have reported no travel outside of Manchester during the period of possible exposure. "It is clear that the bacteria that causes Lyme disease is present in ticks in Manchester as well as most of New England, said Fred Rusczek Manchester's Public Health Director. " Considering this reality, it is important that residents take the necessary steps to help prevent this disease", continued Rusczek.

Lyme disease is caused by a bite by a tick infected with the bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The deer tick is the species most often associated with Lyme disease in New England. The

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symptoms of Lyme disease include in fever, headache, fatigue, and a rash called erythema migrans. The rash often has the appearance of a bull's eye, but does not appear in all cases. In most cases, with early diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics, the disease can be mild with no long-term complications. If left untreated, the disease can spread to other parts of the body including the heart, joints and the nervous system

“Even without the availability of a vaccine, there are many steps individuals can take to prevent Lyme and other possible tick borne diseases” said Rusczek. Since ticks may be present in our yards and nearby wooded areas individuals should consider doing daily tick checks on themselves and their family members. There is good evidence that removal of a tick within 36 hours of attachment will reduce the chance of becoming infected. The tick should be removed carefully so as not to leave the head in the person. The individual should monitor possible symptoms for Lyme disease for 30 days after the tick exposure and seek medical attention if any of the symptoms listed above develop. In some cases, treatment with antibiotics after an exposure to a deer tick may be considered by the individuals health care provider. Other prevention methods include using insect repellent and wearing long pants tucked into socks when going into wooded or high grass areas. Keeping yards well maintained and mowed will also help reduce possible tick exposure. Pets should also be checked for ticks so they do not bring ticks into the home environment.

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